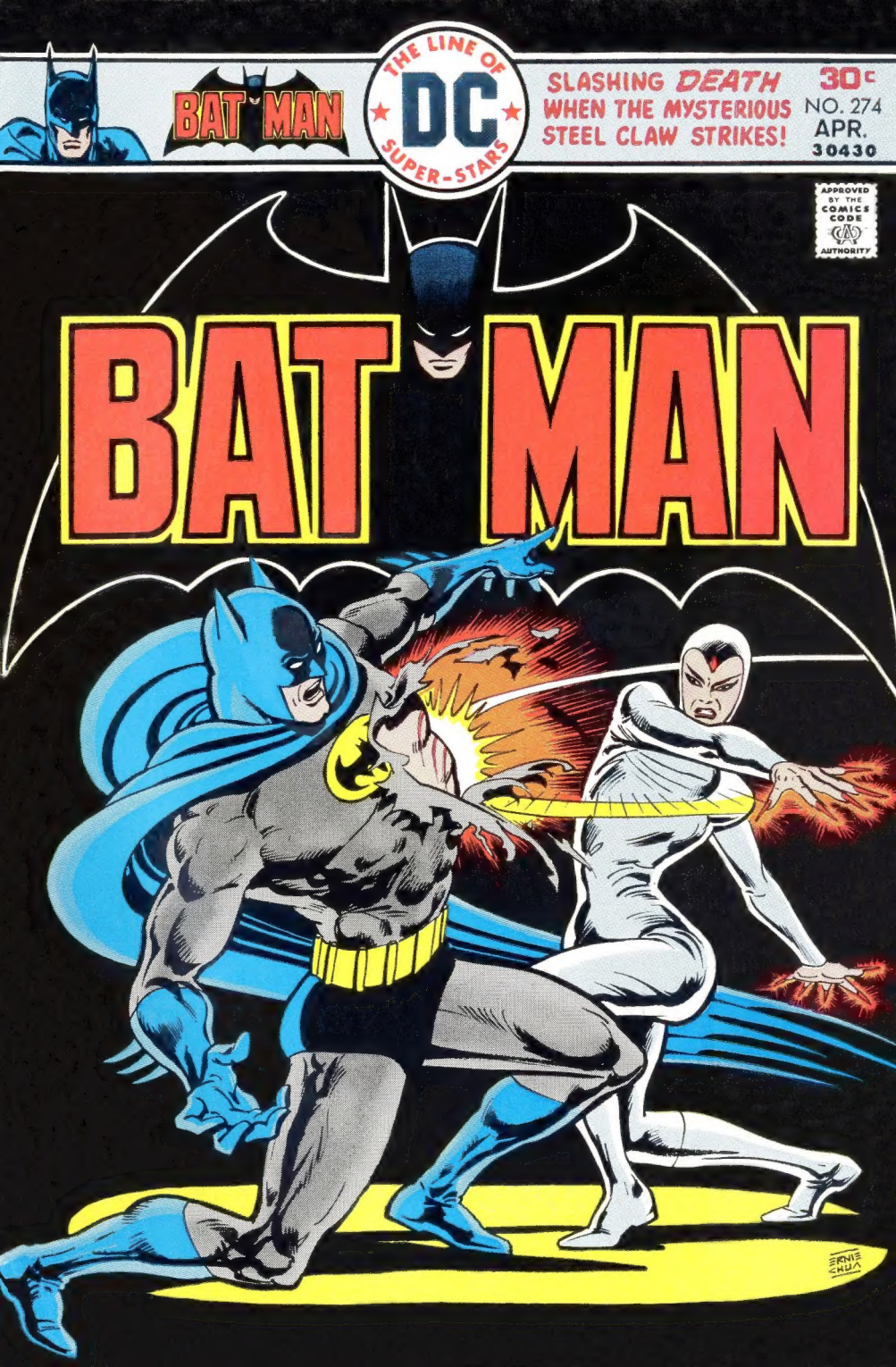
THE LINE OF
DC
SUPER-STARS
BAT MAN
SLASHING DEATH
WHEN THE MYSTERIOUS
STEEL CLAW STRIKES!
30c
NO. 274
APR.
30430
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BAT MAN

SHAZAM!™

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL FIGHTS THE...

MINERVA MENACE!

AUNT MINERVA, LEADING LADY OF THE UNDERWORLD, HATCHES A PLOT TO DOMINATE THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE!

IF THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD RESTS WITH THE CHILDREN, I'LL *CONTROL* THE *CHILDREN!*

GREAT IDEA, BUT HOW?

SHUT UP AND LISTEN!

I'LL USE MY MIND CONTROL MACHINE TO CONFUSE THEIR MINDS. WE'LL CAPTURE THE TV STATION AND BROADCAST "CONTROLLED THOUGHTS"! I'LL CONVINCE THEM THAT WHAT THEY LIKE THEY DON'T *REALLY* LIKE!

BRILLIANT THINKING, AUNT MINERVA!

AUNT MINERVA'S HENCHMEN CAPTURE BILLY BATSON.

MINERVA QUICKLY BEGINS OPERATION "BIG LIE."

YOU DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

YOU DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

I DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

I DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

WE'VE GOT TO DECONTROL THE CHILDREN'S MINDS. AND LET THEM SAY WHAT THEY *REALLY* MEAN!

SHAZAM!

AT THE SOUND OF THE MAGIC WORD MYSTIC LIGHTNING STRIKES AGAIN!

THINK FOR YOURSELVES AGAIN, KIDS!

WHAT AM I SAYING? I LOVE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

GOLDEN SPONGE CAKE WITH CREAMY FILLING INSIDE!! WHAT COULD BE MORE DELICIOUS THAN TWINKIES?

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL HAS BEATEN ME AGAIN!

YOU SHOULDA BRAINWASHED THE KIDS ABOUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN TWINKIES.

STUDIO B

YEAH, AUNT MINERVA, KIDS LIKE TWINKIES TOO MUCH TO BE FOOLED!

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AN UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS '76 STORY

UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS '76
BATMAN
EVERYBODY READY? ROUND 3 COMING UP: THE BATMAN VS. THE UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS '76--ONLY THE BATMAN DOESN'T KNOW WHO HE'S FIGHTING!
AND WHAT ELSE THE MASKED MANHUNTER DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT HIS COMPETITION COULD FILL A BOOK--A MOST MYSTERIOUS BOOK, IN FACT--WHEN HE FINDS HIMSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAZE THAT ASSIGNS HIM A LEADING ROLE IN THE--
"GOTHAM CITY TREASURE HUNT!"
WRITER DAVID V. REED
ARTIST ERNIE CHUA
EDITOR JULIUS SCHWARTZ

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THE UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS '76 ARE NOW AT THE HALFWAY MARK...AND THE ARISTOCRACY OF OUTLAW SOCIETY--THE MASTERS OF CRIME IN EVERY FORM AND FASHION--GATHER AGAIN AT THEIR SECRET HQ... TO CONTINUE THEIR DEADLY COMPETITION--
AS YOU SEE, THE PRECEPING SCORES ARE RELATIVELY LOW--BUT DEFINITELY ON THE RISE--AS WE MOVE ON TO OUR THIRD TEAM--THE AFRO-ASIAN BLOC!
THEY HAVE DECIDED TO COMBINE FORCES, USING ONLY THEIR SUPREME OPERATIVES--THREE FROM EACH CONTINENT!

A HUSH FALLS AS THE AFRO-ASIAN TEAM LEADER--THE CELEBRATED INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL AMBA KAPIRI--CHOOSES BETWEEN THE REMAINING ASSIGNMENTS--
I SELECT THIS ONE--ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF MY KARMA!*
*HINDU BELIEF IN DESTINY-- Editor

FRIENDS, THE DOUBLE-A HAS CHOSEN A VENTURE TO TAX THE FINEST CRIMINAL MINDS AMONG US!
THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO A TREASURE HUNT--WITHOUT KNOWING THE NATURE OF THE TREASURE THEY'RE HUNTING!

ONLY THE CLUE TO THE FIRST PHASE HAS BEEN GIVEN THEM!
EVERYTHING ELSE IS FOR THEM TO DISCOVER AND DECIPHER--IN THE NEXT 48 HOURS!
TO THE DOUBLE-A... GOOD LUCK!

AS THE SEXTET MAKES ITS CEREMONIAL EXIT--
I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO MAKE A BET ON THEM--EITHER WAY!
WELL, YOU HEARD AMBA KAPIRI--CONSULT YOUR KARMA!

IN AN ADJOINING CONFERENCE ROOM, WITH THE TEAM'S LIAISON MAN PRESENT--
FRANKLY, AMBA, I CAN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OF IT! READ IT AGAIN... SLOWLY...
VERY WELL, HARTLEY...
"DEEP IN THE HEART OF GOTHAM CITY, STORM THE VAULT OF ANCIENT LEARNING! SEEK THE SEAL OF GIOVANITTI AND GAIN KNOWLEDGE FROM ITS BURNING!"
A BRIEF, PUZZLED SILENCE FOLLOWS... THEN--
IT'S NOT SIMPLE... BUT IT BEGINS TO MAKE SENSE--AT LEAST THE FIRST PART DOES--
YES, YES! AND I'M SURE THE REST OF IT WILL UNFOLD AS WE PROGRESS!
WITHIN THE HOUR, AT THE SERVICE ENTRANCE OF THE GOTHAM CENTRAL LIBRARY...
I HAVE NEUTRALIZED THE ALARM, CALABAR!
AND I HAVE UNLOCKED THE DOOR! LET US ENTER!
THE FORMIDABLE CALABAR OF NIGERIA AND QUONG OF CHINA MOVE--AND STRIKE--SWIFTLY, SILENTLY--
ONE LIBRARY GUARD... ELIMINATED!
QUICKLY--DOWN TO THE LOWER BASEMENT!
ANOTHER ALARM--BUT IT WILL ONLY TAKE A MOMENT!
AND THIS DOOR IS NO PROBLEM EITHER!
WITHIN MOMENTS...
LOOK AT IT! THIS IS INDEED A VAULT OF ANCIENT LEARNING!
START SEARCHING! THE BOOK WILL HAVE THE SEAL OF GIOVANITTI-- PROBABLY ON THE OUTSIDE COVER, IN THE OLD MANNER!
3

CONFRONTED WITH THOUSANDS OF VOLUMES, THEIR TASK SEEMS ENDLESS... AND YET, BEFORE LONG--
HERE IT IS-- WITH HIS FULL NAME EMBEDDED IN THE WAXEN SEAL!
PLACE IT ON THE TABLE--WHILE I LIGHT THE TORCH!
GIOVANNI'S
MADRE
SET THE SEAL ON FIRE!
IT'S GIVING OFF GREAT HEAT!
WE MUST CIRCUMVENT THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM!
I HAVE ALREADY DONE SO!
BUT-- UNKNOWN AND UNSUSPECTED BY THE INTRUDERS-- THE VERY ACT OF BLOCKING THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM'S HEAT-SENSORS HAS SET OFF A SEPARATE SILENT ALARM!
ELSEWHERE IN GOTHAM-- ON NIGHTLY PATROL--THE BATMAN PROWLS AND PONDERS...
TWO CASES... AND ALL THEY HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT BOTH ARE BUGGING ME...
...AND BOTH INVOLVED HISTORICAL TREASURES OF THE CITY!
ON THE POLICE WAVELENGTH, THE AIRWAVES CRACKLE WITH CODED CALLS OF CRIME AND TRAGEDY...
FIRST, CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE... THEN THE BICENTENNIAL CANNON ON STANDISH HILL...
CAR 47...15 AND 3... REPEAT 47, 15 AND 3... CAR 6...
CAR 19... GCL...85--
THAT'S THE GOTHAM CENTRAL LIBRARY... ANOTHER CITY LANDMARK! --"INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE BREAK-IN!"
YOU BETCHA!
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.
4

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You might want to carry a few extra ones, too. Then, if you meet a werewolf, you can give him something to sink his teeth into instead of you.

A LITTLE LESS THAN A MEAL. A LITTLE MORE THAN A SNACK.

If you've ever said...

"There must be a better way to earn a living..."

one of our free Career Booklets may provide the opportunity you've been looking for.

It happens to all of us, sooner or later. No matter what kind of job we have.

One day, it suddenly strikes home that we're going to have to work for a living the rest of our lives. And most of us are horrified at the thought of forever being locked into the jobs we now hold.

"Surely," we tell ourselves, "there must be a way to get more satisfaction out of working. Surely, there must be a way to find a job that's more rewarding."

"Surely," in other words, "there must be a better way to earn a living!"

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- ☐ Electrical Engineering
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- ☐ Electronics Technician
- ☐ TV Service & Repair
- ☐ Automotive Mechanics
- ☐ Diesel Mechanics
- ☐ Airline/Travel
- ☐ Surveying & Mapping
- ☐ Air Conditioning & Refrig.
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Interior Decorating
- ☐ Restaurant/Club Mgt.
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- ☐ High School Equivalency

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AT THE LIBRARY--A REMARKABLE SCENE UNFOLDS--
THE FLAMES HAVE SUBSIDED--BUT THE SEAL BURNS ON--FORMING LETTERS OF FIRE!
IT IS OUR MESSAGE!
INTENTLY, CALABAR AND QUONG COMMIT THE FIERY MESSAGE TO MEMORY AS IT FADES AWAY...
THEN...
WE KNOW ALL WE NEED KNOW!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
HOW...?
THE BATMAN!
WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
TALK--BEFORE I BREAK YOUR HEADS OPEN AND POKE AROUND INSIDE FOR THE ANSWERS!
WITH A DEFT, INSTANTANEOUS MOVE--
HMM... I SEE...
...NO LIBRARY CARDS--!
5

KRICK
KROCK
--AND VERY LITTLE--
--RESPECT FOR--
--PUBLIC PROPERTY!
KRASH
KRINCK
FIRE!--
--IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!
YOU'LL JUST-- HAVE TO BE--
6

--TAKEN OUT OF--
KNOCK
--CIRCULATION-- LIKE THESE BOOKS!
FOOTSTEPS--?!
ALL AT ONCE-- THERE IS LIGHT AGAIN!
BATMAN--
--WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
AT THE MOMENT, OFFICERS, NOTHING!
WE FOUND THE NIGHT WATCHMAN-- KNOCKED OUT!
I KNOW! TAKE CARE OF HIM!
AND RUN THESE TWO SLIGHTLY DAMAGED WEIRDOS DOWNTOWN!
ALONE NOW... THE BATMAN SEARCHES FOR MEANING--
THIS IS THE BOOK THEY WERE LOOKING AT!
THEY BURNED AWAY THE SEALING WAX HERE! IT'S STILL SOFT TO THE TOUCH...
HOW BIZARRE! A ROOM FULL OF VALUABLE VOLUMES--
--BUT THEY DIDN'T COME TO STEAL ANY OF THEM... NOT EVEN THIS ONE--THEY WERE LEAVING IT BEHIND!
I'LL NEED MY LAB TO RECONSTRUCT THIS...

SOMETIME LATER... AT THE BATCAVE..
NO WAY! NOTHING WORKS--MICROSCOPE, INFRA-RED, X-RAY--NOTHING!
FROM WHAT THEY WERE SAYING, I'D GUESS AT SOME SORT OF MESSAGE-- BUT WHATEVER WAS ON THIS BOOK IS GONE FOREVER!
THE CHAIN IS NIGERIAN... THE HAND-TORCH IS CHINESE --AND THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO GO ON... EXCEPT FOR THE PUNKS THEMSELVES!
ALMOST ELEVEN--THEY'LL PROBABLY MAKE THE TV NEWS... AND I'D LIKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THEM!
...ANOTHER THRILLING EXPLOIT BY THE BATMAN EARLIER TONIGHT, AT THE GOTHAM CENTRAL LIBRARY!
HERE COME THE SUSPECTS NOW... BEING TAKEN IN FOR BOOKING!
WHAT'S THE NIGERIAN DOING-- HAND-SIGNALS?!
HE'S TALKING TO SOMEONE--IN A SIGN LANGUAGE!
I'VE SEEN THOSE BEFORE--
--SOMEWHERE!
AT THE HQ OF THE DOUBLE-A...
C'MON, YOU TWO-- LET'S MOVE!
HARTLEY-- THE SIGNALS!
DID YOU UNDERSTAND THEM?
YES--IT'S THE CRYPTIC MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY!
CONTINUED ON SRP PAGE FOLLOWING.

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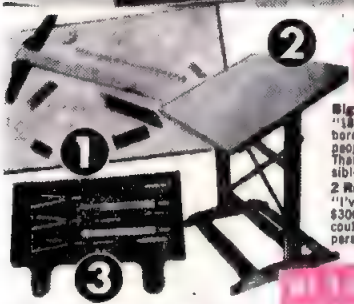

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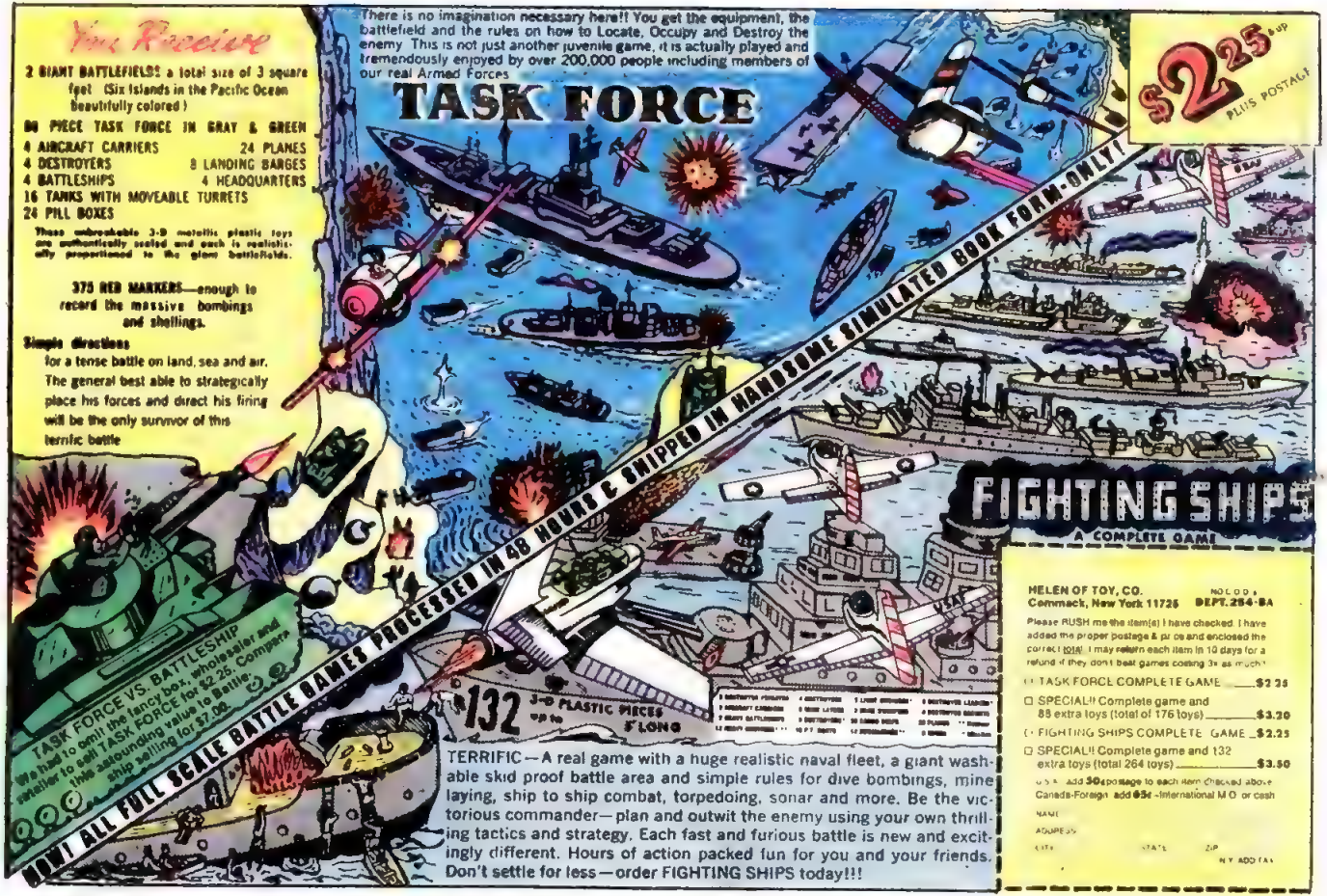
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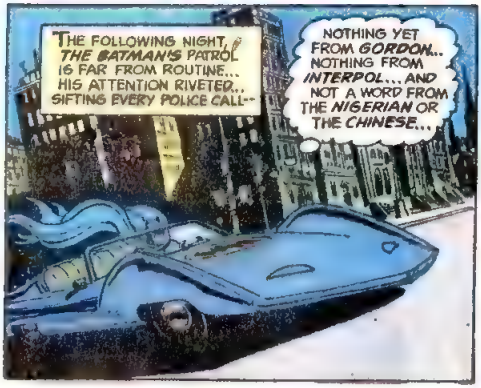
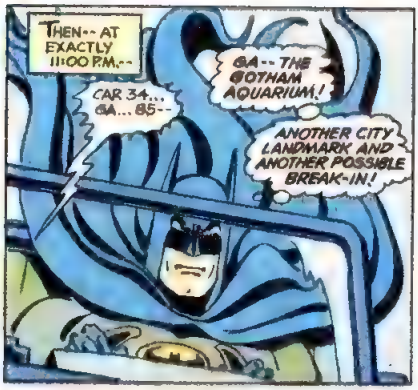
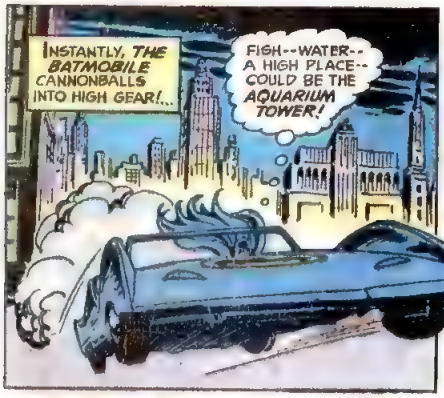
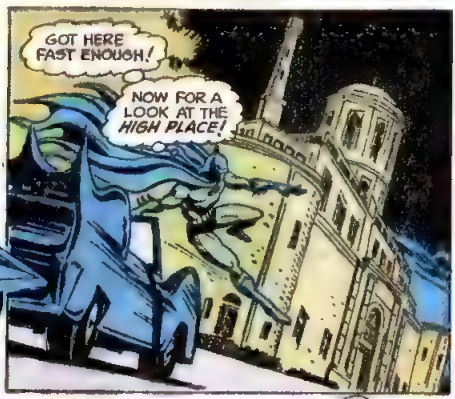
IT'S CALLED "HAND-TALK" --A RARE DIALECT FROM THE CAMEROONS, ONCE USED BY HUNTERS AND WARRIORS, SO AS NOT TO BREAK SILENCE!
BUT IT'S ALL AMBIGUOUS WORD-PLAY, AND MUST BE TRANSLATED!
SHORTLY, K.C. HARTLEY-- RHODESIAN HUNTER, SCHOLAR AND OUTLAW EXTRAORDINARY --TRIUMPHANTLY READS THE MESSAGE--
"NEAR FOUR DOLPHINS IN A FOUNTAIN, FIND A MASSIVE GRANITE MOUNTAIN! CLIMB THE SUMMIT THERE YOU MUST, TO SEEK THE CLUE IN PRECIOUS DUST!"
WONDERFUL!-- WE'LL SOON UNEARTH ITS MEANING!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BATMAN? WHAT IF HE, TOO, SAW CALABAR'S SIGNALS ...AND UNDERSTOOD THEM?
NEVER! HE MIGHT COME CLOSE-- BUT THAT'S ALL!
IT'S ALL IN POETRY--AND EXPRESSES CONCEPTS WELL BEYOND THE WORDS THEMSELVES!
STILL, THEY SAY THE BATMAN'S RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE IS ASTONISHING... INCOMPARABLE...
EXACTLY, TAOUZ-- WHICH IS WHY WE MUST FIND A WAY TO DECEIVE HIM--USING HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE AGAINST HIM!
SIMULTANEOUSLY-- AT THE BATCAVE-- AMBA KADIRI'S FEARS SEEM WELL-FOUNDED AS THE CAPED CRUSADER PORES THROUGH HIS VAST STORE OF ESOTERIC VOLUMES--
HERE IT IS! HAND-TALK... NIGERIA...CAMEROONS-- AND THE SIGNALS I SAW!
LEAPING FISH AND LEAPING WATER ... A HIGH PLACE... AND THERE, A SEARCH...FOR MANY SMALL THINGS... OF VALUE...
IT SEEMS TO BE IN A POETIC FORM THAT CONCEALS ITS LITERAL MEANING!
NOT MUCH...BUT AT LEAST I HAVE A VAGUE NOTION OF WHAT TO WATCH AND WAIT FOR!
9


THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, THE BATMAN'S PATROL IS FAR FROM ROUTINE... HIS ATTENTION RIVETED... SIFTING EVERY POLICE CALL--
NOTHING YET FROM GORDON... NOTHING FROM INTERPOL... AND NOT A WORD FROM THE NIGERIAN OR THE CHINESE...







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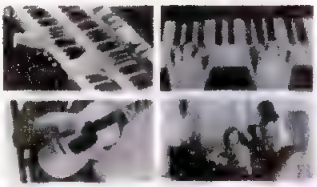

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WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
OFFICER... SUPERMAN, MY NAME IS HARRY JONES. I OWN THIS BUILDING AND I HIRED THIS BOY TO PAINT A MURAL ON IT!
I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY RAN LIKE THAT...
BOYS, THE POLICEMAN WAS DOING HIS JOB. HE MUST INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE PROPERTY DAMAGE!
BY RUNNING AWAY, YOU HAVE MADE YOURSELVES LOOK GUILTY.
DAN HERE, DID THE RIGHT THING. WHEN A POLICEMAN APPROACHES, REMAIN CALM AND COOPERATE. HIS JOB IS TO ENFORCE THE LAW...
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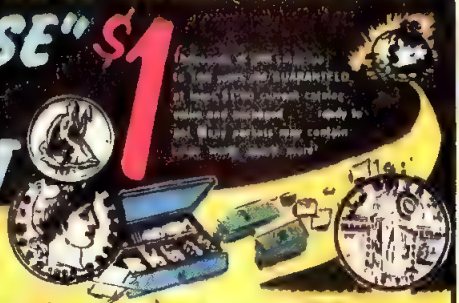

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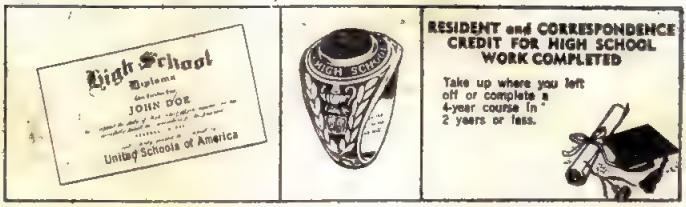
A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--
WHAT'S THIS-- ALL ABOUT?
HER HANDS ARE EMPTY-- BUT THEY SLASH LIKE RAZORS!
SLASSSH
SWASHMM
HALF BARRACUDA AND HALF EEL--!
STEEL CLAWS! YOU'RE AMBA KADIRI!
YOU KNOW ME--?
THE SCOURGE OF BOMBAY!
I'M FLATTERED!
SWISSSH
WELL, I'M NOT! I LIKE A MORE EVEN MATCH!
11

YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT! I SURRENDER!
SENSIBLE! IN FACT, TOO SENSIBLE!
IN FACT, TOO SUDDENLY SENSIBLE!
CLICK!
I'LL FIGURE YOU OUT LATER!
MEANWHILE, LET'S TRADE--YOUR CLAWS FOR MY BATCUFFS!
AS THE BATMAN EMERGES FROM THE GOTHAM AQUARIUM WITH HIS PRISONER--
ANOTHER DELIVERY, OFFICERS!
HANDLE WITH EXTREME CAUTION!
I DON'T GET IT! AMBA KADIRI HERE ... NOT DOING ANYTHING--BUT OBVIOUSLY WAITING FOR ME--
--UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES MUCH TOO COINCIDENTAL NOT TO BE CONNECTED SOMEHOW WITH THAT HAND-TALK MESSAGE
--UNLESS-- UNLESS I'VE BEEN DECOYED!
BUT EVEN NOW-- WHAT THE BATMAN ALREADY SUSPECTS-- IS IN ITS FINAL STAGES, SCARCELY A MILE AWAY--
HURRY WITH THAT SAFE! SOMEBODY MIGHT'VE HEARD THOSE SHOTS, EVEN WITH THIS SILENCER!
THIS MUST BE IT--A SMALL BOX OF GOLD DUST!
--PLUS A BLANK PARCHMENT!
THE MESSAGE SAID, "SEEK THE CLUE IN PRECIOUS DUST!"
SO--SPRINKLE THE GOLD DUST ON THE PARCHMENT!
CONTINUED ON 3 SP PAGE FOLLOWING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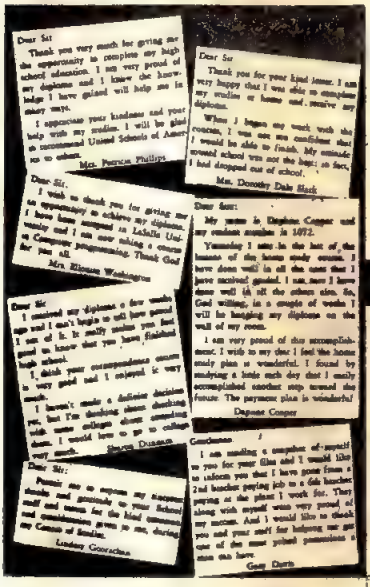

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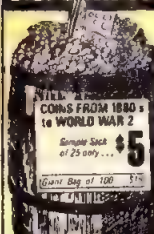

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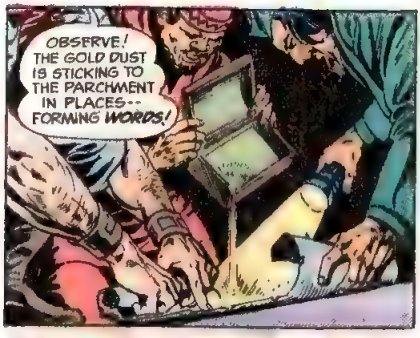
OBSERVE! THE GOLD DUST IS STICKING TO THE PARCHMENT IN PLACES--FORMING WORDS!

"BEHOLD A COMMEMORATION OF AN IDOL OF A NATION; THE TREASURE SHINES THERE CLEAR AND BRIGHT, AND YET IT ONLY SHINES AT NIGHT!"

NEXT MORNING--THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT OF BRUCE WAYNE...
LISTEN TO THIS, MASTER BRUCE...
"THE BODIES OF TWO MURDERED SECURITY GUARDS WERE DISCOVERED LATE LAST NIGHT IN THE OFFICES OF THE SIERRA MINING CORPORATION--

"--BUT ALL THE KILLERS TOOK WAS A VERY SMALL QUANTITY OF GOLD DUST!"
THANK YOU, ALFRED, I'VE ALREADY READ IT...
...AND IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHERE I WAS WHEN IT WAS HAPPENING, THE ANSWER IS--ON A FISHING EXPEDITION!

CONVERSATION CLOSED! UNDERSTOOD?
VERY GOOD, SIR!
MASTER BRUCE IS IN A DREADFUL MOOD... AND I PITY THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT!

THAT AFTERNOON--THE MILLIONAIRE SOCIALITE VISITS THE VICINITY OF THE CRIME...
DOLPHINS--THE LEAPING FISH!... AND THE FOUNTAIN--THE LEAPING WATER!--THAT'S WHAT THE HAND-TALK MEANT!
YEP... AND ACROSS THE STREET, THE HIGH PLACE... WITH THE MANY SMALL THINGS OF VALUE--THE GOLD DUST!

RESTLESSLY, HE WALKS THE CITY STREETS... LOST IN THOUGHT--
HEY, YOU--; WATCH IT!
THE LIBRARY CAPER WAS NO ROBBERY... BUT A MEANS OF FINDING A MESSAGE THAT LED TO THIS GOLD CAPER..
..WHICH BASICALLY WAS NO ROBBERY EITHER--
THEN WHAT WAS IT? A PLACE TO FIND ANOTHER MESSAGE FOR STILL ANOTHER CAPER?
IT'S AS THOUGH SOME GANG WERE ON A TREASURE HUNT.. BY-PASSING TREASURES ON THEIR WAY.. WITH THE REAL TREASURE STILL AHEAD OF THEM!
TWO HOURS LATER-- AT U.O. '76--
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN-- A BULLETIN!
THOUGH LOSING TWO OPERATIVES TO THE BATMAN DURING PHASE-ONE--THE DOUBLE-A MANAGED TO GET THEIR MESSAGE THROUGH!
THEN, TO INSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE SECOND PHASE--THEIR TEAM LEADER--THE MAGNIFICENT AMBA KADIRI-- SACRIFICED HERSELF AS A DECOY!
BRAVO!
WE SHOULD STRIKE A MEDAL IN HER HONOR!
THE REMAINING THREE AFRO-ASIANS--HARTLEY OF RHODESIA, PAGAI OF SUMATRA, AND TAOUZ OF MOROCCO-- ARE ABOUT TO EXECUTE THE FINAL PHASE!
FRIENDS, THE BETTING BOOKS ARE OPEN!
NEXT DOOR, THE TRIO TAKES OFF...
HARTLEY, YOU'RE SURE WE DECIPHERED THE MESSAGE CORRECTLY?
POSITIVE! WE'VE GOT ONE HOUR-- APPARENTLY THE COMMITTEE PLANNED THIS LAST PHASE FOR THE HEIGHT OF THE FESTIVITIES!
GOOD! I LIKE A BIG AUDIENCE!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER--OUTSIDE THE CINEMA PALACE--AS IT INAUGURATES A NEW WEEK-LONG FESTIVAL OF WIDELY HONORED FILM REVIVALS--
HIGH ABOVE THE THRONG--HIDDEN IN THE SUPERSTRUCTURE OF THE HUGE SIGN--THE BATMAN ATTENDS THE PREMIERE!..
THE WAY I SEE IT, THIS MUST BE THEIR OBJECTIVE!
AND ODDLY ENOUGH, THE MORE BANANAS IT SOUNDS, THE MORE I BELIEVE IT!
THE MINUTES DRAG BY.. THEN, ABRUPTLY--THE BATMAN'S VIGIL IS REWARDED--
IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE IN THIS GLARE--BUT THERE ARE TWO FIGURES CLIMBING THAT OTHER LADDER--
--TO THE CATWALK BELOW!
THEY'VE TIED A ROPE TO THE STRUCTURE--AND ONE'S GOING THROUGH THE SIGN--
--TO THE FRONT SIDE!
THE NEXT MOMENT--IN FULL VIEW OF THE CROWDS BELOW--
LOOK! SOMEONE'S CLIMBING DOWN THE SIGN!
IT'S A PUBLICITY STUNT! CAN'T YOU TELL FROM THE COSTUME?
15

AS THE MOROCCAN SPEEDILY CARRIES OUT HIS TASK--SURPRISE BECOMES ASTONISHMENT--THEN, TOTAL CONFUSION!...
AMAZING! THE TREASURE THEY'RE AFTER IS THE WORD "TREASURE" FROM THE SIGN!
WHILE HE'S CLIMBING BACK UP, I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIS WAITING BUDDY--AND BE THERE TO WELCOME HIM!
THE TREASURE SIERRA
HE'S CUTTING A WORD OUT OF THE MARQUEE SIGN!
BUT WHY? WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
IN A FLASH--THE COWLED CRIMEBUSTER SWINGS INTO ACTION!...
THE BATMAN!--IT CAN'T BE!
--BUT IT IS!
HERE'S MY AUTOGRAPH!
TSAK
A-A-H-H-EEE
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING
16

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AND SEE IT AT A GLANCE WITH YOUR OWN

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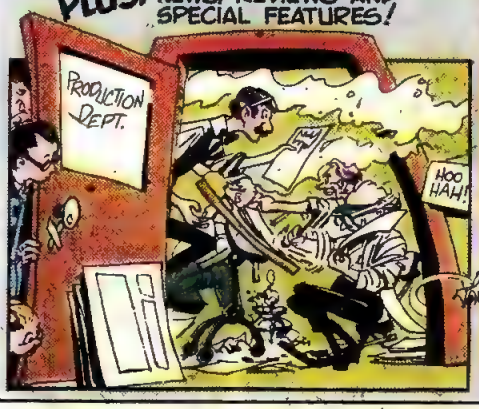

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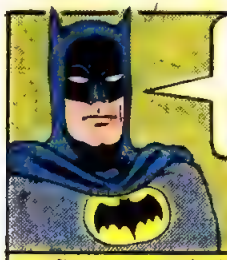

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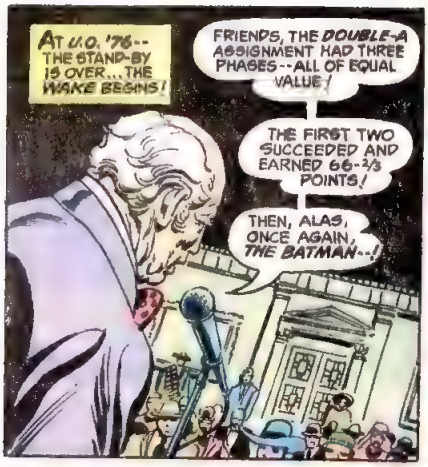
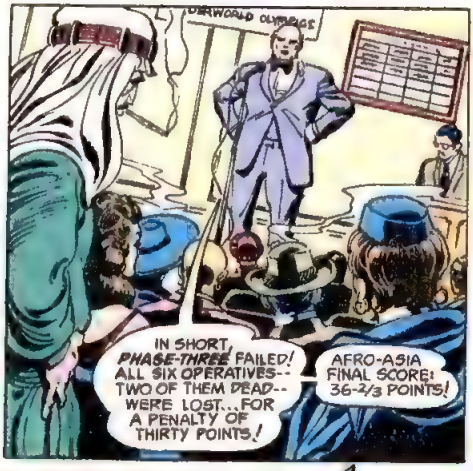
ALLOW 10 WEEKS FOR FIRST DELIVERY!

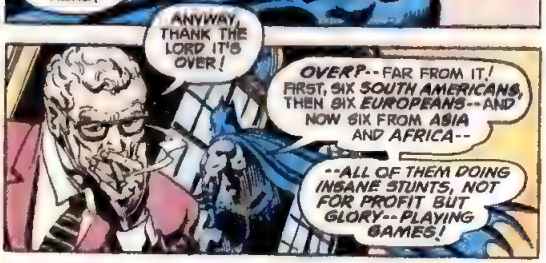
NOW, METHODICALLY, THE BATMAN TIES UP THE CASE--
I'LL ANCHOR YOU HERE AND SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR YOUR PARTNER!
THE MURDEROUS COMBAT IS OVER--
--BUT NOT QUITE YET!
PAGAI! --DUCK!
I CAN'T! --DON'T SHOOT!
RATATATATATAT
WAIT FOR ME!
UNCLE BATMAN WANTS YOU!

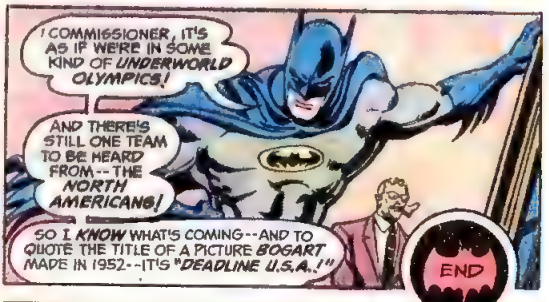

AT U.O. '76--THE STAND-BY IS OVER...THE WAKE BEGINS!
FRIENDS, THE DOUBLE-A ASSIGNMENT HAD THREE PHASES--ALL OF EQUAL VALUE!
THE FIRST TWO SUCCEEDED AND EARNED 66-2/3 POINTS!
THEN, ALAS, ONCE AGAIN, THE BATMAN--!


UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS
IN SHORT, PHASE-THREE FAILED! ALL SIX OPERATIVES--TWO OF THEM DEAD--WERE LOST...FOR A PENALTY OF THIRTY POINTS!
AFRO-ASIA FINAL SCORE: 36-2/3 POINTS!

WHILE AT COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE--
...IT WAS ALL MARVELOUSLY PLANNED WITH CLUES EVERYWHERE --MADRE ON THE BOOK...GOLD DUST FROM SIERRA MINING--
--AND ONCE I REALIZED IT WAS A TREASURE HUNT BASED ON SIERRA MADRE... AND REMEMBERED THE HUMPHREY BOGART FESTIVAL OPENING TONIGHT... WELL, I PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

IT WORKED OUT JUST LIKE THE STORY IN THE FILM CLASSIC--ABOUT A TREASURE OF GOLD DUST MINED FROM A MOUNTAIN--
--WHICH COMES TO NOTHING IN THE END... AS IT DID HERE!

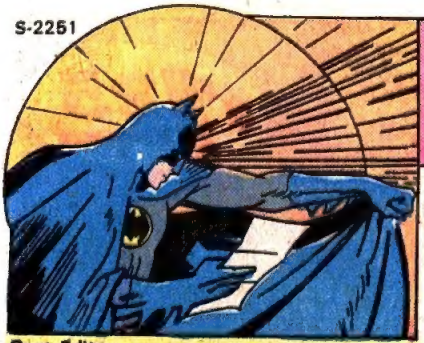

ANYWAY, THANK THE LORD IT'S OVER!
OVER?--FAR FROM IT! FIRST, SIX SOUTH AMERICANS, THEN SIX EUROPEANS--AND NOW SIX FROM ASIA AND AFRICA--
--ALL OF THEM DOING INSANE STUNTS, NOT FOR PROFIT BUT GLORY--PLAYING GAMES!


COMMISSIONER, IT'S AS IF WE'RE IN SOME KIND OF UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS!
AND THERE'S STILL ONE TEAM TO BE HEARD FROM--THE NORTH AMERICANS!
SO I KNOW WHAT'S COMING--AND TO QUOTE THE TITLE OF A PICTURE BOGART MADE IN 1952--IT'S "DEADLINE U.S.A.!"
END

NEXT ISSUE: **"THE FERRY BLOWS AT MIDNIGHT"** AS OLYMPICS '76 COMES TO AN EXPLOSIVE CONCLUSION!

ON SALE DURING THE SECOND WEEK IN FEBRUARY

S-2251



LETTERS to the BATMAN

c/o NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.,
75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019.

Dear Editor:

Prescription: Take one blazing, blood-curdling mystery, superbly written by David V. Reed, mix with the beautiful artwork of Ernie Chua and the World's Greatest Detective and what have you got? **BATMAN #270**'s "Menace of the Fiery Heads"—one of the finest issues in comicdom!

"Fiery Heads" was another gold star for David Reed, who continues to amaze the reader with his complex twists and turns which all seem so simple when Batman explains them in the end. Also to be commended is Dave's fine handling of Bruce Wayne—it's about time somebody put some spunk into Batman's alter-ego.

As for Ernie Chua, he has captured the true Batman so perfectly that it's downright spooky! His cover art was as smooth and easy as the interior work. He is the first artist to give Commissioner Gordon a face with some expression. Bravo, "Champ" Chua!

BRIAN SCOTT, Streator, Ill.

(It never ceases to amaze us how two readers can take the same "prescription" and come up with two totally different "fillings"! Witness the letter below!—BR)

Dear Editor:

Prescription: Take one blazing, blood-curdling mystery, mix well with several scorching encounters that include duplicity, danger and death. Add The Batman and what have you got—? A **HEADACHE!!!**

"Menace of the Fiery Heads" was, to say the least, a flaming flop! The story moved very slowly and made little headway until page 16. The skillful art of Ernie Chua helped a bit, but not enough to save the story. The Batman was portrayed as too headstrong, almost melodramatic. While flying out the window, Batman chorties "I'll find him! Even if he's on the moon—I'll find him!" Now isn't that a bit overdone—in fact, burnt?

David V. Reed has come up with a few hot ideas for Batman tales but he must have burned out with this one!

KEN WOLF, Yorktown, N.Y.

(Since this correspondent seems burned up about #270, let's dive headlong into our next epistle!—BR)

Dear Bob,

The cover of **BATMAN #270** knocked me out! It's been a long time since those wordless, figure-of-the-night, Neal Adams-type covers have graced the issues of **BATMAN**. Ernie Chua's masterpiece was a pleasant surprise and quite exciting!

As for the story, well, I've been a bit prejudiced against David Reed's work because he writes "gimmick" stories which take a weird occurrence and build a plot around it. Yet, "Menace of the Fiery Heads" was great! It seemed a bit like his "Invitation to a Murder" but it had improvements, and great ones at that. The action was more exciting, the youth program subplot tied the story together and Bruce Wayne's stint as crimefighter was well done.

Now for brickbat time. The fight on page 10 is too wordy and makes **Batman** look more like a costumed comedian than an avenger of the night. Does he think those lines up on the spot or does he have microfilms of Don Rickles in his utility belt?

ADAM CASTRO, New Rochelle, N.Y.

(Better than microfilm, Adam! Batman's got Dave Reed—who has written material for a number of famous comedians and also shows his sense of humor as Coram Nobis in PLOP!—BR)

Dear Editor:

"Menace of the Fiery Heads" is fantastic! I clung to every panel. It was one of the best Batman stories I have ever read with the precise amounts of intrigue and suspense and the perfect dash of irony. After I finished reading it, I went back to take a good look at the artwork. The cover is superb and everything inside is top notch!

But there is one problem. How come **BATMAN**'s cape is doing the "blowing in the breeze" bit indoors?

CARL CHRISTIANSSEN, Lakewood, Colo.

(Maybe somebody left the fan on . . .?—BR)

Dear Julie,

Where does David Reed get all the weird ideas? If it isn't some guy with black teeth, it's a maniac who leaves burning skulls at the scenes of the crimes. Dave is becoming DC's master of situations—but not like the old days with the campy stories. We've gone from the ridiculous back to Batman's element—murder with a mysterious twist and "Menace of the Fiery Heads" is a sublime example.

The art wasn't Ernie Chua's best, but it was good nonetheless. I miss Dick Giordano, though, so what are the chances of his doing a solo on the Caped Crusader?

KEVIN L. CALLAHAN, Brea, Cal.

(Chances are very good, especially since Dick's Bat-art is currently on display in DETECTIVE #457's "There Is No Hope in Crime Alley", now on sale!—Bob Rozakis)

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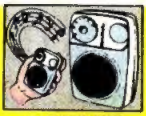
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